

Business Research Advisory Council Handbook



U.S. Department of Labor
Bureau of Labor Statistics
May 1994

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U.S. Department of Labor
Robert B. Reich, Secretary

Bureau of Labor Statistics
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Preface

The Business Research Advisory Committee to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BRAC) was formally organized in the fall of 1947. At that time, the National Association of Manufacturers and the Chamber of Commerce of the United States nominated members to serve on a committee to consult with and advise the Commissioner in the various fields in which the Bureau operated. Prior to the establishment of this Committee, the Bureau had occasional conferences with representatives of leading business organizations. In October of 1955, the name of the Committee was changed to the Business Research Advisory Council.

The Business Research Advisory Council functions through standing committees that correspond to the major program areas of the Bureau. The policymaking body of BRAC is the Board, which is made up of representatives from each of the committees.

A Membership Committee, with representatives from broad-based business organizations such as the National Association of Manufacturers, the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, the Business Roundtable and the National Federation of Independent Business, nominates individuals to the committees and the Board. The nominations must be approved by the Secretary of Labor. BRAC members are persons from the U.S. business community with a knowledge of the priorities of users and/or providers of statistical data developed by BLS. Although the members are associated with trade associations or individual firms, they represent the business community in general, not their individual enterprises.

The Board meets with the Bureau two or three times a year. The committees, currently covering economic growth, employment and unemployment, occupational safety and health statistics, price indexes, productivity and foreign labor, and compensation and industrial relations, meet with appropriate Bureau staff as business requires.

Meetings of the Board and its committees are open to the public, and advance notice of these meetings is published in the Federal Register. This is in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Public Law 92-463) effective January 5, 1973.

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Functions of the Business Research Advisory Council

The Business Research Advisory Council (BRAC) is an advisory group. It provides the Bureau with information and advice on problems and issues in the collection and use of BLS data. It serves as a sounding board for alternative approaches for data collection and reporting, and offers technical input from the perspective of the business user. The Council presents priorities for business users and can suggest adding new programs, changing the emphasis of existing programs, and dropping old programs.

The members of the Council, on their own motion, may raise any matters concerning the conduct of the Bureau's work, either of a technical character or relating to the programs. Members of the Business Research Advisory Council serve as representatives of the business community, and not as representatives of their companies or their organizations. While serving in this capacity, they undertake to perform a variety of services: To participate in meetings of the Board and of the constituent committees; to serve on subcommittees that address specific issues; and to give advice to the Bureau on a personal basis from time to time on matters in which they have special competence.

The Council is not expected to take any responsibility for securing financial support for the Bureau's work. Also, it is not required to take any responsibility for decisions of the Bureau. The responsibility for those decisions rests ultimately with the Commissioner.

The Bureau accepts responsibility for providing technical assistance to subject matter committees, for example, technical background materials on an aspect of a BLS program.

Mission Statements for the Standing Committees of BRAC

The *Committee on Economic Growth* is concerned with the Bureau's work on labor force projections. This includes the macroeconomic model, the input/output matrix, the industry/occupation matrix (which provides staffing patterns by industry), and labor force projections.

The *Committee on Employment and Unemployment* focuses on the Bureau's measures of employment and unemployment, which provide information on the characteristics of those employed and unemployed such as their age, sex, and race; as well as the overall employment and unemployment statistics. The scope of the committee extends to the data on employee hours and earnings and employment by occupation by industry.

The *Committee on Occupational Safety and Health Statistics* directs its attention to the collection, compilation, analysis and publication of statistics on safety and health conditions of workers. Major areas of interest include recordkeeping and reporting requirements for employers on work-related injuries and illnesses, and use of the data for analyzing trends and determinants of health and safety in the workplace.

The *Committee on Price Indexes* covers the Bureau's activities associated with the Consumer Price Index, Producer Prices and Price Indexes, International Price Indexes, the Consumer Expenditure Survey, and the Point-of-Purchase Survey. The last two surveys provide information on the goods and services consumers buy and where consumers shop, respectively.

The *Committee on Productivity and Foreign Labor* encompasses the Bureau's activities associated with measuring productivity, including the indexes of labor and multi-factor productivity, output per unit of capital, compensation per hour, and unit labor costs. Additionally, this committee advises the Bureau on its foreign labor statistics program, including measures such as international comparisons of employment and unemployment, productivity and labor costs, and trends in consumer prices.

The *Committee on Compensation and Working Conditions* advises the Bureau with respect to its data on occupational pay, employee benefits, collective bargaining contracts, and its measures of wage and compensation changes.

Membership Criteria

General Membership

Members of BRAC are persons active in American business who have a combination of background, duties, and expertise that enables them to communicate business priorities for statistical information and suggest ways to collect high quality data at minimum cost to the respondent and the Government. BRAC members carry out informed and objective evaluations of statistical issues involving BLS data that are of concern to business.

The individuals belong to organizations that are users of the types of statistical information produced by the Bureau and/or are providers of the data collected through its various surveys. These organizations reflect the diverse segments of U.S. industry.

Individuals should accept membership on the Council only if they are free to spend the amount of time required to prepare for the meetings, primarily by reading the materials distributed through BRAC, and to participate in the meetings. Occasionally, members will be asked to serve on subcommittees to study specific issues. A member who finds the activities too time-consuming or onerous should ask to be relieved from serving or should expect to drop his or her membership at the end of the fiscal year.

Members serve on a voluntary basis, without compensation or travel expenses for attendance at the meetings, which generally are held in Washington, D.C.

Board Membership

The Board consists primarily of past and present officers of the standing committees. Other committee members may be recommended for Board membership by members of the Board or the Membership Committee.

Membership Procedures

I. Membership Committee

Members: Designated representatives from broad-based business organizations such as the National Association of Manufacturers, the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, the Business Roundtable, and the National Federation of Independent Business, plus the Board chairperson and vice chairperson, and active former Board chairpersons. The individual from each of the business associations must be a member of the Board to serve on the Membership Committee.

Duties: 1. Make all nominations to the Board and its committees.
2. Determine eligibility criteria for Board and committee membership.

II. Procedures—new members

1. Suggestions for all nominations shall be forwarded to the Membership Committee either directly or via the liaison for BRAC.
2. The Membership Committee will vote on eligible nominees and forward its recommendations to the Commissioner in time for the annual replenishment process which occurs in August of each year.
3. Nominations must be approved by the Secretary of Labor.
4. Committee members may make suggestions for nominations to any of the committees. Suggestions for nominations to the committees also are welcome from individuals and organizations not currently represented on BRAC.

III. Procedures—reappointments

Appointments to the Board and its standing committees are for 2-year terms, with approximately one-half of the membership terminating in any year. In general, a member should remain on the Council long enough to become familiar with the Bureau's work; yet some turnover in the Council's membership is desirable. It is an asset to the Bureau to have in the business community a considerable number of people who have become acquainted with the Bureau's programs and staff. Also, the nature of the Bureau's problems changes from time to time. Accordingly, it is advisable for the membership to turn over gradually. Members may retire voluntarily or may be replaced, without in either case implying any dissatisfaction on the part of the member or the Bureau.

1. Each year, the Membership Committee will review the participation and contribution of those members whose appointments expire at the end of the fiscal year and ascertain their desire to continue as members of the board or its committees.
2. The membership Committee will forward the names of those available for reappointment to the Commissioner.
3. Nominations must be approved by the Secretary of Labor.

Operation of the Board and its Committees

I. Executive Committee

Members: Board chairperson and vice chairperson, committee chairpersons, and active former Board chairpersons.

Operations and general policy guidance of the Business Research Advisory Council will be the province of the Executive Committee.

- Duties:**
1. Oversee the operation of the Board and its committees.
 2. Develop guidelines for the agendas for the Board and the committees.
 3. Act on behalf of the Board in periods between Board meetings.
 4. Provide procedures for the election of Board and standing committee vice chairpersons.
 5. Recommend nominees for election as vice chairperson of the Board.

II. Standing Committees

The Executive Committee determines the number of standing committees and their jurisdiction. Each standing committee meets periodically as necessary with BLS Associate Commissioners and staff to discuss subjects related to BLS programs which the committee believes are of concern to the business community. All Board members may attend and participate in any committee meeting desired.

The committee members discuss their opinions and ideas with the BLS staff and with the Commissioner, but the committees are responsible for reporting to the Board on issues emerging from such discussions. Committees may refer back to the Board any questions on which they would like to have advice. Formal advice recommended by committees will be transmitted to the Commissioner via the Board. However, the Board has the power, upon receiving reports or advice from its committees, to amend or supplement the recommendations and suggestions.

Recommendations are made and policy positions are taken only by the Board. The Board generally meets with the Bureau two or three times a year.

III. Voting

In general, the advice is given by the consensus of those present and participating in the discussion at the time the subject is taken up. Members not attending the meeting may send in their comments in writing. Occasionally, all members may be requested to submit their individual opinions in writing on an important problem.

On some issues, the Board or a committee may decide that there should be a more formal expression of opinion. In that event, the members present decide whether they

wish to take a vote on an issue, and, if so, how that vote shall be taken and how the judgment shall be expressed. Each member of the Board and the committees has one vote on matters taken up by their respective bodies. A quorum consists of those members in attendance at a stated meeting. Attendees at meetings who are not members of the Board or the committees may not vote. In all cases where a formal vote is taken, those who wish to be recorded as abstaining or dissenting will be noted in the minutes. Where the Board deems it appropriate, a resolution may be sent to the relevant Government officials or organizations.

Terms of Office for Officers of BRAC

Chairpersons and vice chairpersons of the Board and its committees normally will serve a 2-year term, with the retiring chairpersons being succeeded by the vice chairpersons.

I. Committee chairpersons must be members of the Board. Committee vice chairpersons who are not Board members must be elected to Board membership before becoming chairpersons.

II. As deemed appropriate by the Board or by any of its committees, a chairperson or vice chairperson of any of the respective bodies may be reelected for additional 2-year terms.

